

ARTICLE APPEARED
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HUMAN EVENTS
31 January 1981

THIS WEEK'S NEWS FROM

Inside Washington

• Despite denials from Mathias' office and elsewhere, reliable Senate sources have confirmed to HUMAN EVENTS that the Maryland liberal hopes at an upcoming organizational meeting of the Judiciary Committee to wrest jurisdiction over the FBI and the DEA away from Denton's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism and put it in his own Subcommittee on Criminal Justice.

It is also reliably reported that Mathias is not interested in an arrangement whereby both panels would share jurisdiction on these matters, but wants complete control for his own subcommittee. Whether the liberal Republican can muster the votes for this power grab remains in doubt. Should he succeed, however, many believe it would be a horrible injustice to Sen. Denton, who took the chairmanship of Security and Terrorism with assurances that it would include oversight of these key agencies.

What particularly bothers many observers is that control over the FBI and its charter would give Mathias key authority over this nation's internal security—an area in which his entire record over the years has been, in the words of one veteran security expert, “terrible.” As an indication of Mathias' lax attitude toward the Communist threat, observers recall that he was among a small group of lawmakers who back in 1975 played host in Washington to a delegation from the World Peace Council headed by then-Secretary General, now WPC President Romesh Chandra.

In hearings before a subcommittee of the House Intelligence Committee, the Central Intelligence Agency has described the WPC as “the Soviet Union's single most important international front organization,” adding: “It is usually the first of the various front groups to respond to new Moscow propaganda initiatives and it coordinates the activities of a number of other front groups.”

Of Chandra himself, who is a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, the CIA said he “has a record of servile loyalty to the Soviet Union. He views Moscow as the foremost champion of peace, challenging imperialist proponents of the arms race, and says so publicly at the drop of a gavel. He is on the road constantly, speaking out at WPC-sponsored conferences, forums and protest gatherings all over the world; he makes frequent stopovers in Moscow on these travels, to consult on the party line.”

Mathias' hospitality to such a man and the organization he represents indicates to many a failure to understand the true dimensions of the threat posed by Soviet-controlled front groups. As a former POW in Hanoi, of course, Denton understands the threat all too well. Hence, it is important that Denton and his conservative colleagues repulse the reported Mathias challenge.